

Message Text

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46 L

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02

DODE-00 INR-07 CIAE-00 SY-05 SCCT-01 IO-10 PRS-01

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P R 301540Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8022

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1024

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SHERER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CZ

SUBJECT: MORE ON DUBCEK; ARRESTS

REF: (A) PRAGUE 954; (B) PRAGUE 989

1. SOURCE FOR INFORMATION PROVIDED REFTEL JAN PETRANEK STOPPED BY EMBASSY APRIL 30 WITH COMMENTS THAT THE FOUR INDIVIDUALS HE HAD NAMED -- MLNAR, JAROS, BARTOSEK AND SEN (WHOM HE IDENTIFIED AS HISTORIAN) -- HAD NOT BEEN ARRESTED BUT RATHER INTERROGATED. EACH HAD MADE A STATEMENT TO THE POLICE SETTING HIMSELF AGAIN IN CONCERT WITH THE SENTIMENTS OF 1968 AND WITH THOSE EXPRESSED IN THE DUBCEK LETTER.

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2. PETRANEK SAID THAT DUBCEK HAD BEEN AN UNWILLING PARTY TO LETTER, WHICH INDEED HAD BEEN DRAFTED BY OTHERS, INCLUDING VACULIK AND HAVEL. THE IDEA FOR THE LETTER HAD FIRST BEEN SUGGESTED TO DUBCEK AFTER SMRKOVSKY'S DEATH EARLY IN 1974, WITH THE PLEA THAT SUCH A PROTEST GESTURE WOULD HAVE FAR MORE IMPACT UPON ITS INTENDED READERSHIP WITH DUBCEK'S NAME AT THE BOTTOM. DUBCEK FINALLY GAVE IN, BUT WAS NEVER ACTIVE IN OR KEEN FOR THE WHOLE AFFAIR, SAID PETRANEK. HE ADDED THAT THE POLICE HAVE CALLED IN DUBCEK FOR AT LEAST ONE INTERVIEW SINCE EXCERPTS OF THE DUBCEK LETTER WERE PUBLISHED IN THE WEST; WHEN THE POLICE CAME TO INTER-ROGATE JANOR RECENTLY (REFTEL), HE TOLD THEM HE WOULD BE WARNING DUBCEK BY PHONE. WHEN JANOS CALLED, SAID PETRANEK, DUBCEK SAID HE WASN'T SURPRISED, AS EIGHT PLAINCLOTHESMEN WERE CONSTANTLY FOLLOWING HIM.

3. ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO DUBCEK, PETRANEK TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE PRESSURE IS ON FOR DUBCEK TO LEAVE, BUT THAT DUBCEK WON'T GO. THIS WILL FORCE A DECISION WHETHER TO DROP THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE EX-KSC LEADER OR TO BRING HIM (AND THE OTHERS BEHIND THE LETTER) TO TRIAL, BUT NO ONE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN WHICH WILL BE THE OUTCOME. PETRANEK SAID THAT THE ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF THE DUBCEK MATTER BY ALOIS INDRA IN A MAJOR SPEECH APRIL 29 MARKING THE LIBERATION OF OSTRAVA WAS A SIGN THAT INDRA WAS PROCEEDING FAR MORE CAUTIOUSLY-- AND INTELLIGENTLY -- THAN BILAK OR HUSAK; PERHAPS THIS WAS A SIGN THAT THE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AGAINST DUBCEK AND COMPANY WERE OVER, HE SAID. (FOR THE RECORD, WE NOTE THAT RUDE PRAVO REPORTED BRIEFLY APRIL 29 THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR MATSKEVICH RECEIVED INDRA THE DAY BEFORE.)

4. EMBASSY HAS NOW OBTAINED COPY OF VACULIK LETTER (REFTEL B) AND IS POUCHING COPY TO DEPARTMENT (INR/RES). VACULIK CLAIMS MATERIAL SEIZED WAS ALL LEGAL, AND DISCLAIMS ANY ANTI-STATE BIAS OR ACTIVITY. HE VOICES FEARS THAT PRESENT ANTI-DUBCEK CAMPAIGN IS INTENDED TO PREPARE PUBLIC FOR NEW WAVE OF REPRESSION AS IN 1950'S, AND THAT THIS WILL GIVE THE LIE TO GOC POSITIONS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (READ CSCE). ACCORDING TO GERMANS, SOME "LISTY TYPE MATERIAL" WAS FOUND DURING SEARCH OF HOME OF HISTORIAN VILEM PRECAN. WE UNDERSTAND CONFIDENTIAL

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LETTER HAS NOW BESMN PUBLICIZED IN WEST. RUMOR HAS IT THAT OTHER LETTERS AND PERHAPS SOME PETITIONS, ARE CIRCULATING AS WELL.

5. ONE OTHER RUMOR, NOT NECESSARILY BUT CONCEIVABLY CONNECTED WITH PRESENT INTERNAL SITUATION, IS THAT ALL CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARIES HAVE BEEN TOLD TO STAY IN PRAGUE DURING AUGUST FOR A "SPECIAL" PARTY MEETING.

6. COMMENT: THE PORTRAYAL OF DUBCEK AS AN UNWILLING PARTNER
FITS IN WITH MUCH PREVIOUS SPECULATION AMONG OBSERVERS HERE,
ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO THE STYLE OF THE LETTER ITSELF.
PARTY LEADERS MAY HAVE UNWITTINGLY SUPPORTED THIS, BECAUSE
THEY HAVE CONCEDED THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN USED BY OTHERS, AND
THUS NOT HAVE BEEN FULLY AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS
DEEDS. HUSAK SAID AS MUCH SPECIFICALLY IN HIS KICKOFF SPEECH.
THIS LED TO THE WARNING THAT DUBCEK COULD NOT EXPECT TO CON-
TINUE HIS PRESENT ACTIVITIES WITHOUT FACING THE
CONSEQUENCES. DUBCEK'S FURTHER ACTIONS MAY YET
PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS AFFAIR.
PERRY

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